


November 2, 1988

OPEN LETTER TO MOUNTAIN BICYCLE RIDERS

THIS LETTER IS SENT TO ADVISE YOU THAT THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA HAS FINALIZED ITS OFFICIAL POSTING OF THE RATTLESNAKE CANYON TRAIL. THE POSTING IS NOTIFICATION THAT BICYCLES AND OTHER MECHANICAL VEHICLES ARE PROHIBITED ON THAT PARTICULAR TRAIL. THE COOPERATION OF BICYCLISTS WILL HELP US MAINTAIN THIS TRAIL AS A PRISTINE AND SAFE TRAIL FOR EQUESTRIANS AND PEDESTRIANS OF ALL AGES. WE WILL BEGIN TO ENFORCE THIS CLOSURE EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 10, 1988. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN THIS MATTER.

Sincerely,



Jerry Ambrose  
Parks Director

cc: Captain Stock, S.B.P.D.  
Skofield Park Staff



A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA REQUESTING THAT THE LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST SUPERVISOR BAN BICYCLES ON RATTLESNAKE AND WEST FORK RATTLESNAKE TRAILS ABOVE SKOFIELD PARK

WHEREAS, the City of Santa Barbara owns the property traversed by the trails known as the Rattlesnake Trail and the West Fork Rattlesnake Trail (U.S. Forest Service Trail 27W15) situated in Rattlesnake Canyon above Skofield Park; and

WHEREAS, on May 9, 1961 the City of Santa Barbara granted Right-of-Way easements to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S. Forest Service) for "the construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and full, free, and quiet use and enjoyment" for these and other trails; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara City Council is aware of the recent policy decision by the Los Padres National Forest Supervisor to allow bicycles on all but Wilderness Area trails, on a trial basis, with that decision arrived at after an extended public input and discussion period; and

WHEREAS, these trails are truly hiking/equestrian in character over most of their length due to narrowness, steepness and the presence of rocks and erosion control structures; and

WHEREAS, the historical users of these trails (hikers, equestrians) have experienced several near-accidents while using these trails due to the improper use of them by riders of bicycles; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara City Council held a public discussion of this issue on February 10, 1986 and made the finding that public safety concerns outweigh the need to allow bicycles on this trail;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of Santa Barbara hereby requests that the Supervisor of the Los Padres National Forest ban bicycle use on the Rattlesnake Trail and West Fork Rattlesnake Trail (Los Padres National Forest Trail 27W15).

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CITY OF SANTA BARBARA  
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

TICKLER  
DEC. 17

REPORT DATE: November 6, 1987

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Richard D. Thomas, City Administrator

SUBJECT: BICYCLES ON RATTLESNAKE CANYON TRAIL - RESOLVING AN IMPASSE

*Agenda / Info*  
*Option #1 AS*  
*ask for West Fork*  
*prohibit all mechanized*  
*allow vehicles*  
*6/0*

RECOMMENDATION:

That City Council:

- Evaluate the options that are currently available to the City in making a policy decision regarding bicycle riding on Rattlesnake Canyon Trail.
- Consider public testimony relating to the issue.
- Determine a policy course and direct staff to implement it.

DISCUSSION:

The City has been advised by Arthur Carroll, Los Padres National Forest Supervisor, that the Forest Service will, for now, continue the policy of allowing mixed use of hikers, equestrians, and bicyclists on the Rattlesnake Canyon Trail. Under the current easement agreement, the Forest Service has every right to this policy, even though this City Council adopted a Resolution on February 10, 1987 (attached), asking the Forest Service to ban bicycles on this trail. This decision by the Forest Supervisor has created an impasse on this issue.

The Mayor and the Parks Director have been presented with survey data and analysis

PREPARED BY: Jerry Ambrose  
APPROVED BY: *[Signature]*

REVIEWED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ Finance \_\_\_\_\_ Attorney \_\_\_\_\_

STAFF USE ONLY

TO: Jerry Ambrose, Parks Director  
FROM: City Administrator

ACTION TAKEN: \*\*Approved Option 1 of the Staff report to direct Staff to post the upper and lower portions of Rattlesnake Canyon Trail to prohibit bicycles, and negotiate an agreement with the forest Service for maintenance of those portions at City expense; directed that the DIRECTIONS: Forest service be requested to post the West Fork notification of the closure; Council directed prohibition of the use of mechanized vehicles in the entire Skofield wilderness area as intended by the donor.

Meeting Date NOV 10 1987  
Agenda Item No. 16

Jerry: Please handle the above.

material which led to the decision by the Forest Supervisor. The Forest Service staff also provided seven options that the City might pursue if it wishes to resolve the impasse. Those options were:

1. Implement an order to prohibit Mountain Bikes on Rattlesnake:
  - 1) FS enforces with City dollars.
  - 2) City enforces
2. Continue to allow mixed use on front country trails (withdraw resolution).
3. Increase patrols on Rattlesnake Trail with City support dollars - allow mixed use (withdraw resolution).
4. City can withdraw Rattlesnake R/W, prohibit bike use, and resubmit to the FS for consideration.
5. FS patrol Rattlesnake to control reckless drivers.
6. City to provide their personnel for patrol of Rattlesnake, FS continues to maintain and sign trail, R/W easement modified.
7. FS relinquishes R/W - City accepts all trail management for Rattlesnake.

The Mayor asked the Parks and Recreation Commission to look at the issue again, and make recommendations to City Council for resolution of the impasse. At its meeting of August 26, the Joint Parks and Recreation Commissions voted 5/1 for option number 4. The thinking that supported this recommendation was:

- \* The trail really isn't suited to bicycle use.
- \* Neither the City nor the Forest Service has resources to patrol the trail regularly.
- \* Use of bicycles will probably fall off naturally as the word gets around.
- \* Bicycle use on the Rattlesnake Trail is very light now.
- \* If the Forest Service declines an amended easement agreement, volunteers should be available to maintain this trail at little cost to the City.  
(Based on audience participation at P & R Commission meeting).

Staff has discovered several things since the August meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

1. The City cannot unilaterally withdraw the easement for this trail.
2. The Forest Service will not agree to relinquish the easement.
3. The forest Service has determined that the existing trail easement agreement is for only a portion of the Rattlesnake Canyon Trail; and in fact, does not cover the lower third (approximately) or the upper third (approximately) of the trail.

Staff assessment, therefore, is that City Council has a new set of options based on the above information. The options seem to be:

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Bicycles on Rattlesnake Trail

1. Direct Staff to post the upper and lower portions of Rattlesnake Canyon Trail to prohibit bicycles, and negotiate an agreement with the Forest Service for maintenance of those portions at City expense.
2. Direct staff to post the upper and lower portions of Rattlesnake Canyon Trail to prohibit bicycles, and to undertake maintenance of these portions of the trail with City staff and volunteers.

Both of the above options assume passive enforcement of the prohibition by City Parks and Police Staff.

3. Withdraw the resolution of February 10, and direct staff to negotiate an agreement with the Forest Service for trail easements for the upper and lower thirds of Rattlesnake Canyon Trail, with the intention that the Forest Service would then have management and maintenance control over the entire length of Rattlesnake Canyon Trail. This option assumes that the Forest Service would continue to manage mixed use on this trail.

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